

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2015

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

According to the most recent announcement, the State of Iowa is responding to eight confirmed and four probable cases of the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI H5N2) in commercial poultry farms affecting over 10 million birds. This year alone, other outbreaks have been discovered in Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington and Wisconsin.

Iowa leads the nation in egg production, producing approximately 16.5 billion eggs annually, and is ninth in turkey production. Within the past month, the HPAI H5N2 virus has impacted one-sixth of Iowa's 59.5 million egg laying chickens and over 100,000 turkeys. This outbreak has devastated Iowa egg producers and turkey farmers who have had to destroy their flocks. In addition, the entire Iowa poultry industry has been negatively impacted by countries that have established restrictions and bans on poultry exports from Iowa.

As elected officials in Iowa, we ask the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to act within its statutory authority and provide communities battling the avian influenza with all available assistance. We also request that USDA provides us with time-sensitive updates on new cases and requests for further resources to help turkey farmers and egg producers. Finally, we request that you inform Congress of the economic impact that the poultry and egg reductions will have on producers and consumers.

We commend the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship for its work with producers and for the diligent role that our poultry industry is taking to address this outbreak from further spreading. While there is no known risk of HPAI H5N2 transferring to humans, stopping the spread quickly is necessary to safeguard our country's poultry and egg producers and ensuring a stable domestic supply of these foods that are an integral part of healthy diets for millions of Americans. Our nation has a vested interest in containing and preventing the spread to other Iowa communities and states, and ensuring consumers are not adversely impacted by increasing egg and poultry prices.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. We hope that you will work to expand efforts to control and eradicate HPAI H5.

Sincerely,

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress

Chuck Grassley
Senator

Joni Ernst
Senator

Steve King
Member of Congress

Rob Blum
Member of Congress

David Young
Member of Congress